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CONFESSION

Ex lib. OF Col. MSS. B. 1. 1. 1.

FAITH,

Published on special occasion.

WHEREIN

Is contained the Substance of the most material Principles of the Gospel, and Christian Faith, in contradistinction to the Errors and Heresies by some held and maintained, in opposition thereunto.

Whereunto is annexed,

A POSTSCRIPT, with brief Animadversions on some things, contained in a *Confession of Faith*, lately published in the name of the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations in *London* and the Countrey.

Written by THOMAS COLLIER. K

8. 10. To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Tim. 2. 8, 9. Now as James and James withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: Men of corrupt minds, reprobate (or of no judgment) concerning the faith, But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

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Confession of Faith.

I. Concerning God.

1. **I** Believe that there is one only true God, the Great Almighty one, who hath his Being in and of himself, and hath given Being unto all things, the great Creator and Preserver of all things, *Deut. 6. 4. Isa. 4. 21. 2 Cor. 8. 6. Gen. 1. 1. Act. 17. 24 to 28.* That he is an Infinite Spirit, most Holy, Wise, Just, Merciful, and Faithful, *Job. 4. 24. 1 Sam. 2. 2. Isa. 6. 3. Psal. 147. 5. Isa. 40. 28. Deut. 32. 4. Zeph. 3. 5. Exod. 34. 6. Mic. 7. 8. Tit. 3. 4. Deut. 7. 9. Tit. 1. 2.* Eternal and Omnipresent in all Places, *Deut. 33. 27. Isa. 57. 15. Psal. 139. 7 to 12.*

2. Yet I do believe according to his Word, that his most glorious Habitation, Dwelling-place, and Throne is in Heaven, *Isa. 57. 15. and 66. 1.*

3. I do believe that God made Man upright, in his own Image, and that by Sin he fell from that Estate, into an Estate of Sin and Death, *Eccel. 7. 29. Gen. 1. 27. and 3. 17, 18, 19. Rom. 5. 12.*

God and Christ to the World, in this wonderful Gospel-undertaking, are,

1. Because the Scripture saith it, and if I should not so believe, I should (as many others do) make God and Christ Lyars, which is the great and damning sin, 1 *Job. 5. 10.* with *Mark 16. 15, 16.* But he that believeth the testimony that God hath given of his Son, hath set to his Seal that God is true, *Joh. 3. 33.*

2. Because the denial hereof rooteth up the foundation of Gospel-preaching, there being three things that God hath set in unity in this matter, that Man may not put asunder, without nulling the whole design of God in the Gospel, viz. of Gospel-preaching, of Life to the World, on the terms thereof.

First, The general love of God to the World in the gift of his Son, *Job. 3. 16, 17.*

Secondly, And sutable to this general Love of God to the World, is Christ giving himself a Sacrifice for the sins of the World, *Job. 6. 51.* The Sacrifice must be as large as the Fathers love, else it answers not his Will and End in giving his Son, *Heb. 10. 7.*

Thirdly, Sutable to this general Love, and general Sacrifice, is the general Commission for publishing thereof to the World, that so they might understand and believe this Love, and be saved, *Mar. 16. 15, 16.* These three are as large one as the other, and stand in unity: take away the

the general Love of the Father, and the general Sacrifice of the Son, and the general Commission ceaseth, it being grounded on the two former; so that deny the two first, and it ends Gospel-preaching.

3. As an Effect, because the denial hereof rooteth up the Foundation of Gospel-Faith; for if the Foundation of Gospel-preaching be removed, then Gospel-Faith must cease, it being no part of the Doctrine of the Gospel, that Christ was a Sacrifice only for a few, it can be no part of Gospel-Faith so to believe: if it were, the Doctrine of the Gospel must give a very *uncertain sound, and then who could prepare himself to the Battel?* 1 Cor. 14. 8. But it not being so, an open way is made, and a sure foundation is laid in the Gospel, to build our Faith upon, *Job. 3. 16.* And as this is the Doctrine, so this is the Faith of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 15. 3, 11. *So we preach, and so ye believed, i. e. that Christ died for our sins,* the first Doctrine that is to be preached to sinners, and so the first that is to be believed.

4. Because the denial hereof leaves all that miscarry through unbelief to perish for want of a Saviour, and not through their own unbelief and disobedience to the Gospel, as the Scripture affirms, which maketh God a Lyar, *Job. 3. 18. Heb. 3. 8. Jude v. 5.* For if any such were, for whom Christ died not, if such should believe, they could not be saved, there being no Salvation

rational things against Scripture-light, seems most strange.

1. It's not only irreligious (being contrary to the Scripture) but irrational, to believe that God should in this his wonderful Gospel-under-taking of Love and Grace to Men, design and determine Salvation to so few, and the Damnation of the World without all hope and means of help, is irrational to imagine.

2. It's irrational as well as irreligious, to understand the Scripture so in this matter, as tends to render it obnoxious, ridiculous, and false, in saying, *That God so loved the World in the gift of his Son, that whosoever do believe in him, shall not perish*; and that the Gospel is *the good will of God to Men*, and that Christ gave himself *for the Life of the World*, and yet intended no such thing, but the Damnation of the World: for if Christ had not died, and been raised again, there had been no such thing as Salvation or Damnation to any, because there had been no Resurrection, and so no Judgment, 1 Cor. 15. 21, 22. and 17. 18, 19. Act. 17. 31. So that this contradicting notion tends really to render those Scriptures to sound (if what they say were true) that God so hated the World, that he sent his Son to damn the World, and that God sent his Son to die for the World, for no other end but to raise them up that they might be damned: which is both irreligious and irrational to imagine.

3. It's

3. It's irrational for us to believe (contrary to the Scripture) that God should have so little respect to the glory of his own Name in so wonderful an undertaking, it being more glorious to the Name of God, for his Son to die for a World, to restore a World, to lay a foundation of Faith and Salvation for all such as fall in with, and glorify him in his wonderful Grace to Men, and irrational to narrow and limit it to so few, so exceeding contrary to the Scripture, and derogatory to the glory of so wonderful an Undertaking.

4. It's irrational (as well as irreligious) to believe that God in his Word should complement with the World, as if he loved them, to offer them Grace, on gracious, holy, and honourable terms, to call and invite them with promises of acceptance, as if he intended good will unto them, and will damn them the deeper in Hell for their disobedience (as themselves affirm,) and yet never intended any Grace to them, nor could intend it, if Christ died not for them. As if God dealt with poor perishing Sinners, as *Joab* dealt with *Amasa*, 2 Sam. 2. 9, 10. and as *Judas* dealt with Christ, to offer them a kiss of love, *Psal.* 2. 10, 11, 12. designedly to damn them the deeper in Hell, is both irreligious and irrational to imagine.

That which is usually objected in this matter, is, *Rom.* 9. 16. to 22. and 11. 7. That God hath
from

from his own will reprobated some, and they cannot be saved, but must perish: That Christ died not for them, nor was any good will in the Gospel intended to them.

1. To this I say, That we may not understand the Decrees of God, so as may contradict his revealed Will and Law of Grace to Men, which calleth upon all, and promiseth life to all that do believe and obey him therein.

2. That it's both irreligious and irrational so to understand one or two Scriptures, as is contrary to the whole Word of God that speaks of the same matter, where God saith, not only that he loved the World in the gift of his Son, and that he *tasted death for every one*, and calleth and inviteth all to accept the Grace, *Rev. 22. 17.* But also saith, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, and why will ye die?* And answereth to it, that he *hath no pleasure in the death of the Wicked, but that they would turn and live,* *Ezek. 18. 31, 32. and 33. 11.* and that Men by sin destroy themselves, *Hos. 13. 9.* So *1 Tim. 2. 4.* he *would have all Men to be saved, &c.* And it must needs be both irreligious and irrational so to understand, *Rom. 9.* as to contradict and give the lye to all these Scriptures, and many more.

3. We may so understand, *Rom. 9.* as is both Religious, God-like, and Rational, so as will comport with the whole Scripture and Analogy of Faith, *viz.* That when Men have hardened them-

themselves against the Mercy and means of good by God offered them for their spiritual and eternal welfare, which was the present case relative to the *Jews*, and the same of *Pharaoh* likewise brought as an instance, and of which the believing *Gentiles* were (and are) in danger, if they so sin, *Rom.* 11. 20, 21. and in this case God is at liberty to exercise Justice and Mercy as he pleaseth without any derogation to his Gospel-Law of Grace.

Quest. If God willeth the good of all, is he not able to effect it? doth he will what he cannot effect?

Ans. This with some is much pleaded, though as wide from truth as weak: We are to distinguish between his Effecting and his Requiring Will, his revealed and requiring Will being his absolute Will to us, and contrary to which we may not suppose any secret Will in God; and it's enough for us to know his absolute revealed Will, with sufficiency of means and helps for performance thereof, on neglect of which the Damnation will arise.

The absolute revealed Will of God to his People of old was, that they should keep his Law, and yet they transgressed it: and dare any say, it was not his real Will so to have it, but that he had a secret Will contrary thereunto? Let such read and ponder *Psal.* 81. 13. *Isa.* 48. 18. and the same in the Gospel, *Luk.* 13. 34. and 19. 41, 42. where they may find the Lord pitying them for
their

thereof in the Gospel, *Mat. 26. 15, 16, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.* and that at (and after) his appearing shall be the resurrection of all things, *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.* In and after which with his Father shall be his eternal Kingdom and Glory, *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.*

III. Of the Scriptures.

I do believe that the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testament, is the Word and Will of God, and especially the doctrine of the Gospel contained therein, is the alone Ground and Rule both of Faith and Practice, *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.*

IV. Of the way in which we may obtain the Life here promised in the Gospel.

That Faith in (Repentance) and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the doctrine of the Gospel, are the means of our interest in the justification and life therein promised, and that is absolutely the condition thereof, as the Will of God, which none that are capable of sinning can possibly avoid, *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.* yet not the meritorious or deserving cause thereof, that bring alone in Christ Jesus, as the only

only atoning Sacrifice for sin, *Col. 1.20. Eph. 5.2.* and that whoever do believe in, love; and obey the Lord in the Gospel, shall be saved, *Mar. 16. 15, 16. Act. 16.31. Heb. 5.9.*

The Reasons why I believe, that not only Faith but Gospel-obedience and works are the terms of our Interest in Justification and Life, are,

1. Because the Doctrine of the Gospel so states it, not only in the Scriptures before mentioned, but likewise in many others, as *Mat. 7. 18, 19, 20. Rom. 2. 8, 9, 10. Gal. 5. 6. Jam. 2, 14, 17, 20. 10 26. 1 Job. 2. 17. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

2. Because the Doctrine of Justification by Faith without works, as it is scriptureless, and so false; so it is a graceless, licentious and vain Doctrine, that will not, cannot save, *Jam. 2. 14, 20.*

3. And that both the Faith and Works must be such as the Gospel requireth, and not what Men please; or else the Lord will say at that day, *who required these things at your hands?* And among all the virtues and duties required in the Gospel as concomitants with Faith, Love to God and Men are the chief, *Mat. 22. 37, 39. Rom. 13. 8. Jam. 2, 8. Eph. 6. 24. 1 Cor. 16 22.* because, where this is in truth, it carrieth on to the right performance of all other Duties both to God and Men: and where this is wanting, there can be
no

no Religion in Truth, or acceptable with God: Faith without Love to God, and Love and Mercy to Men, will never justify nor save, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Jam. 1. 27. and 2. 14. and the reason is, because the Gospel is a Ministration wholly of Love and Mercy, and the Love and Mercy of God in the Gospel is manifest, especially in giving and forgiving; and this he expects should be effected by the Power thereof in all his People. And it's to be feared, that the great failing among Christians in this matter (much arising from the Doctrine of Justification by Faith without Works) will occasion many to part with Christ at the last day with Sorrow, as the young Man did in the Gospel, Mat. 19. 22. because there will then be Judgment without Mercy, to them that have shewed no Mercy, James 2. 12. Read and ponder Mat. 18. 32, to 35. and I do believe, that whatever is stated in the Gospel, as the terms on which Grace and Life is promised, is absolutely necessary thereunto, without which we cannot rightly claim the Promise, as Mat. 5. 3, to 12. Rom. 2. 7, to 10.

V. Of the Power and Will of Man.

I do believe that all Men have a power and liberty of Will, with the means and helps that God affords (especially under the Gospel,) to refuse the Evil, and to chuse the Good, so far as

will render them inexcusable in the Judgment, who refuse his Counsel, and choose to follow their own Wills and Lusts, *Josh. 24. 15, 22. Luk. 10. 42. Phil. 2. 12, 13, 14, 15. Mat. 11. 28, 29. Rom. 1. 20. and 2. 1, 2.*

The Reasons of this my Faith : are,

1. Because I do not find that God in his Word, threatens to condemn any for weakness, but for wilfulness ; not because they cannot, but because they will not believe, *Joh. 5. 40. Luk. 3. 34. Mat. 22. 14, 3. 6.*

2. Because he blames, pities, and bemoans those who refuse his Counsel, and transgress his Laws, *Psalm 81. 11. Luk. 13. 34.*

3. Because he calls and invites Sinners to come in and accept his Grace, which we may not imagine, were it impossible for them so to do, *Isa. 55. 6, 7. Rev. 22. 17.*

4. Because to suppose Men to be incapable to believe and obey the Gospel, with the helps afforded, without a Miracle (as some say,) is to suppose Men (in this matter) not to differ from Beasts, who are capable by Miracle to do what God will have them. God could, and did make *Balaam's ass to speak with man's voice.* . But Men shall one day know, that God made them Men and not Beasts, if they make not themselves so by beastly Principles and Practices. 'Tis true, that in the Gospel many were converted to the Faith by the sight of Miracles done without them,

them, *Act. 5. 14. and 13. 12.* but the conversion of Sinners is no where called a Miracle, that I know.

§. Because for us to suppose that God should bring forth so gracious a dispensation of Love to the World, in the gift of his Son ; and Christ to die for the World ; and in love, send the Gospel of this Grace to be published to the World, with gracious Invitations to accept it, and to state an Interest therein, on impossible terms to be obtained without a Miracle, and do not effect this Miracle, and yet will damn People for not obtaining, is not only dishonourable to God, to Christ, to the Gospel, and to the Publishers thereof ; but renders the whole glorious design of God therein, to be null and void, discouraging all Men from believing thereof, it rendring them altogether incapable, and therefore is to be denied by all sober Christians.

VI. That Faith in the Lord Jesus is effected by the Power of God in the Gospel.

Yet §. I do believe that whoever do obey the Lord, in the Faith of the Gospel, in Sincerity and Truth, that it is by the Grace, Spirit, and Power of God in the Gospel, *Rom. 1. 16. & 5. 5. and 10. 14.* by which Grace and Power they are and shall be kept through Faith, and a holy dependancy upon him unto Salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.*

Job. 10. 27, 28, 29. and 15. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10. Psal. 37. 39. and 125. 1. and that without this holy dependancy upon, and cleaving to the Lord, in the Faith, Love, Hope, and obedience of the Gospel, Believers may possibly, yea, very probably fail of, and fall from the Grace of God, and so miss of the Glory promised, Heb. 3. 12. and 12. 15. 2 Pet. 3. 17. Although I do believe, that some are so known of God, and given to Christ, as that they have been, and shall be in time called, and supplied with persevering Grace, so as to obtain the end, Job 6. 39. Rom. 8. 29, 30. Yet these are only known of God, 2 Tim. 2. 19. and leave no room for any to be high-minded, but to fear an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, Rom. 11. 20. Heb. 3. 12. nor doth it at all derogate from the general Grace of God to Men, Job. 6. 40.

The Reasons of my believing the danger of Believers failing of, and falling from the Grace of God, without their careful watch and keeping close with him, are,

1. Because the Scripture so plentifully speaks and forewarns of the danger thereof, but never of the impossibility of falling. Besides those already mentioned, among many see these, *Rom. 8. 13. and 11. 20. 1 Cor. 10. 12. Col. 1. 23.*

2. Because the Scripture mentions some that were fallen, *1 Tim. 1. 19.* and others that were fallen, or would fall, *2 Pet. 2. 1.* —and the rest in

in danger of falling, *Chap. 3. 17. 1 Cor. 9. 27.*

3. Because the Lord himself, and his Apostles best knew the danger, and what Doctrine was best for our safety, and to prevent the danger, (to whom we ought to give heed, and not to our own devices) whoever taught the danger, but never the impossibility of falling from Grace, as before hath been proved, *Mat. 10. 22. Luk. 9. 62.*

4. Because the Doctrine of impossibility of falling from Grace, being contrary to the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, must needs be a graceless and dangerous Doctrine, and that the Lord knew, and therefore hath so plentifully stated the contrary in the Scripture. If we would study a Doctrine tending to cause People to fall of, and fall from the Grace of God, we cannot study a more likely, than to teach impossibility of falling. Remove the danger, and the careful and watchful fear will be over, *Rom. 11. 20. Heb. 12. 25, 28, 29,* and the watchfulness and Prayer will quickly cease, *Luk. 21. 36.* and it's greatly to be feared, that many (insensible) grow graceless, whilst pleading impossibility of falling from Grace.

Object. The Doctrine of possibility of falling from Grace, is an uncomfortable Doctrine.

Ans. That Doctrine which is most safe, is most truly comfortable. To know the danger, and to keep on our watch, being the way appointed for our safety : In that way may we ex-

pest safety, and so true and solid consolation, *Isa. 64. 5. 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4, 5. with ver. 12.* Whatever comfort People may pretend unto, without the testimony of a good Conscience in a holy walk with God and Men, they will find no safety therein at last: so that being the best way, that is most safe, and it being most safe to know the danger, (it's so accounted in all cases with wise Men) the most safe way must needs be most truly comfortable, and the other most truly dangerous, and in the end uncomfortable.

VII. And further, to speak of the Restitution of all things, and the World to come, which in some Cases I have more largely stated in my Answer to Mr. Cox's, in my 7th Chapter.

And as I do believe the Restitution of all things, the new and restored World, and the glorious Kingdom and Raigh of Christ with his Saints therein, mentioned in the conclusion of the second Article: so as to the degrees, distinctions, and times of accomplishing thereof, I do believe,

1. That it shall extend it self to the recovery of all Mankind from the first Death, fallen into by the first Transgression, *Gen. 3. 17, 18, 19. Rom. 5. 18. 1 Cor. 15. 22.* and all the World out of that Estate it fell into by Mans sin, *Act. 3. 21. Rom. 8. 19, 20, 21. Rev. 21. 1, 5.*

2. That

2. That after the Resurrection and Judgment, it shall extend to the glorious Salvation of all the Faithful, with Christ in his Eternal Kingdom and Glory, *Job. 14. 2. Mar. 10. 30.*

3. That this Restitution and Glory of the new World in all its parts, shall be effected by degrees, in the times appointed by the Father, *Act. 1. 7. and 3. 21. Eph. 1. 10.*

4. That at, and after the Judgment, shall be some kind of degrees of blessing to the Nations in general; *by the Seed of the Woman that shall break the Serpents head, the Seed of Abraham in whom all Nations of the Earth shall be blessed,* (except such as are by the blessed Seed himself excepted) *Mat. 12. 31, 32. Prov. 1. 23, to 33. viz. such as wilfully rebel against the Light, and so sin away their share in this Blessedness promised.*

That there shall be some general Blessing for the Nations after they have born their Judgment: my Reasons for it are,

First, To prove the Truth.

Secondly, The Time.

1. Because the Scripture in express terms saith it, That in *Abraham's Seed* (that is, in *Christ*, *Gal. 3. 16.*) *all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed*, *Gen. 12. 3. and 22. 18.* with many other Scriptures to the same effect, *Psal. 72. 17. Isa. 66. 18.* Though Believers are the Subjects of the special Blessedness, yet that answers not the general terms of the Promises, nor argues that

none else shall have any blessing in the World to come. When the Scripture saith, *All Nations, all the Families, all the Kindreds of the Earth shall be blessed in him*; I shall in this say, as Mr. Increase Mather saith, on the Mystery of *Israel's* Redemption, from Rom. 11. 26. *All Israel shall be saved*, that is, all the Tribes of Israel, in opposition to those that say, *It intends a few of all*. He saith Pag. 5, 6. *That cannot be the meaning of the Words, for the note of universality, [all Israel,] will not bear such a particular restrained interpretation: Surely the Scripture is not wont to use such harsh improprieties of Speech, as to say All, when not all, but a few only are intended. And* Pag. 9. *All Israel shall be saved*, that is, very many Israelits shall be saved; it noteth not only many, but most; it signifieth not only a majority, but a very full and large generality.

So I say, That those large and general Promises to the Nations, of Blessedness in *Abraham's* Seed; as, *All Nations of the Earth, all the Families, all the Kindreds of the Earth shall be blessed in him*, extends it self far beyond a few, a very few in comparison of all the Nations, but it signifieth not only a majority, but a very full and large generality, and not a few only.

2. Because there are many other Promises to the Nations in general, as properly arising from, and answering to those forementioned Promises to *Abraham*, and are of like import to the Nations,

tions, to be performed in time, extending far beyond the special saved ones, and distinct from them, as that, *All Nations that God hath made, shall come and worship before him, and glorify his Name, Psal. 86. 8. and that all the ends of the World shall remember & turn to the Lord, and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before him, Psal. 22. 27. and Psal. 66. distinct from the Church. Ver. 18. It shall come, that I will gather all Nations, & Tongues, and they shall come and see my Glory. Ver. 23. All Flesh shall come and worship before me, saith the Lord: and this shall be in the time of the new Heavens and new Earth, Ver. 22. and Mal. 1. 11. From the rising of the Sun, unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles: with multitudes of like import in the Prophets that might be mentioned; and in the New Testament is the same confirmed, as the opening and explaining of the Prophecies in the Old, Act. 3. 21. Eph. 1. 10. Phil. 2. 9. 10. with Rev. 5. 13. 1 Tim. 4. 10. where it's exprest (for substance) in the terms of general and special Salvation, *God is the Saviour of all Men, especially of them that believe.**

2dly. The time when this general blessing to Nations, in which they shall worship and serve the Lord, and his People shall be, i. e. in the World to come, at and after the Judgment is over, and not before. I believe from these Scripture-grounds following, which will further confirm

firm the present Truth as stated, as likewise the time when it shall be.

1. Because that *all the Kindreds of the Earth, all the Nations that God hath made*, cannot be capable to be blessed by Christ, and to serve and worship him, till the Resurrection and Judgment is over; for *all Nations that God hath made*, intends all that ever hath been, or shall be, or else it is not *all the Nations that God hath made*; but all must be raised up, and come and *worship and serve the Lord, and glorify his Name*, which will not (cannot) be, till after they are raised, and have past the Judgment.

2. Because it must be in the *times of the Restoration of all things*, in the new and restor'd World, that this must be accomplished upon the Nations, and therefore not till after the Resurrection and Judgment, *Isa. 66. 18. with verse 22, 23.* and the new Heavens and new Earth promised, will not be till after the dissolution or change of the old, *2 Per. 3. 13. Rev. 21. 1, 5.* and it's in this time and state, that all the Nations shall worship and serve the Lord, and therefore it must be after the Resurrection and Judgment.

3. Because the Scripture saith, it shall be when the Lord cometh to sit upon his Throne of Judgment, to judge the World in Righteousness, that *all the Nations shall enjoy this Priviledge and Blessing, Psal. 9. 7, 8. with Psal. 96. 10, 13. and 98. 9. and 82. 8. Arise, O God, judge the Earth:*

for

for thou shalt inherit all Nations. His inheriting all Nations must be at, and after he hath judged the Earth, and therefore at and after the Judgment.

4. Because the Scripture not only saith, it shall be in the times of the new Heavens and new Earth, and in and after the Judgment, but in that time when the great Transgressours shall be suffering, where *their Worm shall not die, neither shall their Fire be quenched*, Isa. 66. 18, 23, 24. In this time it is, *that all Nations, and Tongues shall come and see the Glory of Christ, and all Flesh shall come and worship before him, and go forth and look upon those in torment; and therefore it must be after the Resurrection and Judgment.*

5. Because this worshipping and serving of the Nations, is plainly stated in Scripture, to be after they have born their Judgment, and that is over and past, as Rev. 20. The Judgment is past and over, and after that comes *the new Heavens and new Earth*, into which comes down the glorious, *holy City from God out of Heaven*, Chap. 21. 12. And after this the Nations worshipping and serving the Lord, v. 24, 26. and to this agreeth Zeph. 3. 8, 9. *after the gathering of the Nations, and pouring out upon them the Indignation, even all the fierce Wrath, which sutes with the seven last Plagues, in the very terms thereof, Rev. 15. 1. in which is filled up the Wrath of God, and is to be accomplished at and after Christs appearing in*
the

the Judgment, that the gathering of the Nations, and pouring out of *all the fierce Wrath* must be, Rev. 14. 14—19, 20. and after this is over, he will turn to the People a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent, Zeph. 3. 9. which fully agreeth with Psal. 86. 8. and 22. 27. with many other Scriptures to the same effect.

6. Because the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the Nations, after the Judgment is over, in the eternal Estate, Rev. 22. 2, 5. and Isa. 19. 22. and Ezek. 47. 11, 12. which are Prophecies of the same time and state, and to which (very probably) Rev. 22. 2. relateth, and therefore it must be after the Judgment.

7. Because the promise of the peaceable time and state of the World, and of the Kingdom of Christ therein, in which Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation, neither shall they learn War any more, Isa. 2. 4. Mic. 4. 3. Psal. 46. 8, 9, 10. will not be till the thousand Years are expired, and the Judgment past, Rev. 20. 7, 8, 9. When the thousand Years are expired, the Nations will be in a flame of War, therefore the peaceable time promised to the Nations will not (cannot) be, till this is over, when they shall learn War no more; and in this time and state it is, that all Nations shall come and worship, therefore after the Judgment is over, Isa. 2. 2, 3. Mic. 4. 5. Psal. 46. 10. Mal. 1. 11.

8. Because

8. Because it's more than probable, that all the Scriptures that promise to Christ an everlasting Kingdom upon the Throne of *David*, do relate to his Kingdom and Raig in the World to come, and that too, after all his Enemies are subdued, and visibly subjected under him, which will not be till after the Resurrection and Judgement is over and past, *1 Cor. 15. 23, 24, 25.* which expressly relates to; *Psal. 120. 1.* and that his right-hand Kingdom on his Fathers Throne, *Rev. 3. 21.* is an intervening Glory, as a present reward of his Sufferings, and for performance of his Mediatory-office, till his own Kingdom take place, which will be his highest visible Glory, and of which *he is in expectation*, *Heb. 10. 13.* And hence it likewise appears, that the service and worship of the World will not be, till this promised Kingdom take place, in which all Nations shall serve him, *Psal. 72. 8, 9, 10, 11.* It must be *when all Enemies are made his Footstool.*

9. Because (as before I said) this general Salvation by Christ in the World to come, is that which tends so wonderfully to exalt the glory of his Sufferings, and Death for the World, and the design of God therein. The more universal the design was, the more of Grace, and the more glorious to the name of God and Christ, and the narrowing thereof to a few only; and all the rest of Mankind, with the whole Creation eternally to perish, not only contradicts the truth

truth of the whole Volum of the Book of God, but wonderfully derogates from the glory of God and Christ designed in this wonderful Undertaking, *Job. 13. 30, 32. Isa. 6. 3. with Job. 12. 41. Psal. 72. 19.*

10. Because it's that in which the Glory of the Kingdom and Raigh of Christ in the World to come is so wonderfully concerned: for *the honour of a King is in the multitude of People*, Prov. 14. 28. If a King should have a glorious Queen (only,) and have no People, no Subjects, where would his honour be? The Church is (and shall be) the Lord's Queen, the royal and eternal Consort of Christ, *the King and Lord of Glory*, Psal. 45. 9. *Upon thy right-hand did stand the Queen in the Gold of Ophir.*

It's true, the Queen is a Subject to the King, yet above all others with the King, and nearest to him, as his royal Consort, bearing part (at least) of the honour of Government. But if the King have not his other Attendants, his Royal Council, with multitude of Subjects in variety of degrees, where will his honour be?

So the Lord and King Christ Jesus, especially of the new and restored World, *Zech. 14. 9.* who then shall be visibly *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*, Rev. 19. 16. and shall have all things futable to such a Kingdom; yea, far surpassing all the Glory of the most glorious Monarchs that ever were in this World as Types of this his Glory; yea,

yea, *Solomon* (the most famous Type of Christ, in this his most glorious reign) in all his glory came infinitely short of him.

For first, His Church, his Spouse, yea, his then married Wife and Queen, *Rev. 19. 7.* shall keep Court with him in the glorious, holy City, and shall reign with him for ever, *Rev. 22. 3, 4, 5.*

Secondly, The glorious holy Angels shall be his and his Queens Attendants, *Heb. 1. 6. Rev. 5. 11.* for the Church his Wife and Queen shall be united nearer to him by far than the glorious holy Angels, *Heb. 2. 16. Eph. 5. 30.* who shall be his and his Churches Attendants.

Thirdly, All the World shall be raised by him, and be his Subjects, in various states and degrees, and shall worship and serve him (as before hath been proved,) and all as an effect of giving himself a Sacrifice for *the Life of the World*, *Joh. 6. 51. 1 Joh. 4. 14. Phil. 2. 6. to 11.* and in which consisteth a very great part of the glory of his Kingdom in the World to come; for allow him no Subjects in his Kingdom, besides his married Wife and Queen, you take away a very great part of his Kingdom and Glory.

11. And finally, this blessing of the Nations in general in their worshipping and serving the Lord Christ, must and shall be in the World to come, at and after the Resurrection and Judgment, not only from the former grounds stated,

stated, but because this Glory shall be effected at and after the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, *Rev. 10. 6, 7.* when the time of this World shall be no more, *but the mystery of God spoken of by the Prophets shall be finished.* And what is this mystery spoken of by the Prophets, but the *Restitution of all things, spoken of by all the holy Prophets that have been since the World began?* *Act. 3. 21.* the glory of the World to come, and the Kingdom of Christ therein. Which mystery is more fully explained at the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, *Rev. 11. 15.* to which *Chap. 10 6, 7.* refers, *And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great Voices in Heaven saying, The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Here is the finishing of the mystery of God, spoken of by all the holy Prophets since the World began. The breaking of the Serpents head by the Womans Seed, the Blessing promised to all Nations in *Abraham's Seed*, the glorious Kingdom of the Seed and Son of *David* (promised) over the whole World, shall then be finished, *Psal. 2. 11, 12.* when the Glory of the Lord shall fill the whole Earth, *vers. 19.* and all Nations shall worship before him, *Rev. 15. 4.*

That whatever Blessing the Nations in general may obtain at that day, as it shall be after they have past the Judgment, so their state in general will be a state of Service, Bondage, and Slavery;

Slavery, compared with the state of the married Wife, *Isa.* 60. 14. *Zech.* 14. 9, 16, to 19. *Mic.* 7. 16, 17. yet far excelling those that shall be under the lowest and deepest Judgment, *Isa.* 66. 24.

That as the World to come, and whole Restoration shall be all effected by the Death, Resurrection, Life, and Power of Christ; so his Kingdom and Glory therein (over the World,) with his married Wife the Church, shall be Eternal, and never have an end; it shall be a Kingdom and World without end, *Dan.* 7. 14, 27. *Isa.* 45. 17. *Rev.* 11. 15. and 22. 5. *Luk.* 11. 33. I shall (nor need) in this say no more, but only offer three things to serious consideration.

1. Where is any Scripture that doth declare an end of the World to come, and of the Kingdom of Christ therein? If not, but fully the contrary, then it must needs be mans invention so to imagine.

2. Whether the Eternal Life and Glory promised, be not in the World to come? *Mar.* 10. 30. with *Mat.* 19. 29. and if so, then where is any promise in the Scripture of Eternal Life in another World? and if not, then whether those that suppose an end of the World to come, do not withal suppose an end of the Kingdom of Christ, and of the Life and Glory of the Saints promised in the Gospel therein?

3. Where is any Scripture that doth expressly or impliedly assert the going away of Christ with all

his Saints to Heaven after the Resurrection and Judgment is over? and if there be none, then whether we may not safely conclude it to be but the device of Men, and so have no truth to it, it being so contrary to the Glory of his Kingdom and Government here below, in the new and reformed World.

I know but two things; that is, or can be said in this matter.

1. That the Scripture exhorteth us *to lay up for our selves treasure in Heaven, Mat. 6. 20. to be seeking after, and setting our Affections on things above, Col. 3. 1, 2.* that the *incomprehensible Inheritance that fadeth not away, is reserved in Heaven, 1 Pet. 1. 4.* that Christ will *come again, and receive his People to himself, that where he is, there they may be also, Joh. 14. 2, 3.*

2. To what I say, I answer, that our All is in Heaven, our God, our Christ; and the Glory to come is all in Heaven; is fully granted. But, 1. It shall come down from thence into the new, and reformed World. Christ shall come down, and the glorious Holy City shall come down from God out of Heaven, and the Tabernacle of God shall be with them, Rev. 21. 2. and 22. 3, 4. and so the Saints, the Virgin, and Elect shall be here below, in the Holy City, and which Christ will receive them with himself, and this is explained 1. Cor. 15. 51. As clouds to be caught in the last time, and to be changed into glory, coming down from

Great God out of Heaven, as *Heb. 1. 3*: The coming of Christ from Heaven is called: the revelation of Jesus Christ, *1st 2 Thess. 1. 7* & *1. 10*.

He is maybe, and is objected; that it's said, *1 Cor. 15. 24, 28*: That he must deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all, and the Son himself shall be subject: which seems to intimate an end of the Son's Kingdom, and so probably a going away to Heaven with all his Saints.

But we may not understand one Scripture so, who contradicts all others that speak of the same thing, that can be neither true, nor false; and all other Scriptures that speak of the Kingdom of Christ in the World to come, say, unchangeable, without end: and therefore we may not understand *1 Cor. 15. 24, 28* to be contrary thereto; and can be neither true nor false.

Therefore that Scripture rightly understood, explains itself, so as well compares with all the Scriptures that speak of the same thing, that the World to come with the Kingdom of Christ therein, shall be eternal: id est, as long as the Kingdom of the Son, as exercised at the right hand of the Father, that shall be delivered up, and not his own Personal, Visible Kingdom, as upon the Throne of David that must be for ever. He says, and that it is his personal Kingdom, at the right hand of

God, is clear, *v. 24, 25.* for he must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his feet, herein alluding to *Psa. 110. 1.* and this Reign is after his coming from Heaven, and the first Resurrection, *Vers. 23, 24.* and is apparent, that it's this Reign and Kingdom that shall be given up when all his Enemies are his Footstool, of which he is in expectation, *Heb. 10. 13.* for in this right-hand Kingdom shall he be, after he is come from Heaven, *Mat. 26. 64.* and after the first Resurrection, *1 Cor. 15. 23, 24.* and till the whole Conquest over all Enemies is over, *Psa. 110. 5, 6, 7.* and of Death the last Enemy, which will not be till the thousand Years Reign and Judgment be over, *Rev. 20. 14.* for until the whole work is finished, and the last Enemy destroyed, which is Death, he is still in his right-hand Kingdom, in the proper sense of *Psa. 110. 1.* *1 Cor. 15. 24, 28.* and hath not given it up to God the Father, for that is not to be done till all is made subject to him, and then shall he reign over all as the visible King and Lord of the whole Earth, *Heb. 2. 8. Isa. 54. 5. Zech. 14. 9.*

(2.) It is apparent that it intends not the giving up of his own visible Kingdom after all is visibly made subject to him, because it is the highest Glory mentioned in Scripture that is designed him, of which he is in expectation, *Heb. 2. 8. and 10. 13.* for all except the Father himself must be visibly put under him, but he is excepted that did put all things under him, *1 Cor. 15. 27.*

So that the sum of all is, to let us to know, that in this top-glory of the Son of God, and the Son of *David*, when all things are put under him, and made subject to him, and that he is the visible King and Lord of the whole Earth, of which he is in expectation; that the Father is excepted herein, only himself will be above him, and the Son subject to him, in this his glorious Kingdom; that the Father will rule eternally in and by his Son, in this his visible Glory; and in this sense will the Father be all in his own Kingdom, being delivered up by the Son, *and in all*, in his Son's Kingdom, though the Son be the only visible Lord thereof. And thus God the Father will not lose his Glory in his Son's Kingdom, but then shall be perfectly performed that saying of Christ, *Job 5.22,23. that all Men shall honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, and this Glory of the Father in the Son's Kingdom shall be no diminution at all to the Son's Glory, but rather the augmentation thereof. As the Son's Kingdom at his Fathers right-hand, is no diminution to his Fathers Glory, so shall not the Father's Kingdom and Glory (as exercised in, by and with the Son) any whit diminish either the Sons or the Saints Glory, but increase it rather.

And hence it is, that it's sometimes called the Fathers Kingdom, *Mat. 6. 10. and 13. 43. and 26. 29.* and sometimes the Son's Kingdom, *Mat.*

16.28. *Luk.22.29. Job.18.36. 2 Pet.1.11.* All which tends to clear this matter, viz. That the Kingdom of Christ, when all is brought under him, in the World to come, shall be eternal, the Father reigning in and by him. As he now reigns with the Father on his Throne, and so shall continue till all his Enemies be made subject to him, so shall his Father reign with him on his Throne. And as the Father shall be *All* on his own Throne in Heaven, so shall he be *in all* in his Son's Kingdom here below, *Phil. 2. 10, 11,* and indeed the top-glory, both of the Father, Son, and Saints, designed in the Restitution by Jesus Christ, will issue here, *1 Tim. 6. 14, 15, 16, Mat. 19. 28.*

And in this Estate shall Christ be both King and Priest upon his Throne for ever, *he being a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck, Heb. 5. 6. and 7. 17. consecrated so for evermore, vers. 28.* The middle Person between God and Men, between the Father and his Church, as the head thereof, in whom their standing and service shall be perpetually presented and accepted, and the service of the Nations shall have acceptance, *Isa. 60. 7.* And thus shall the blood of Christ be known to be the Blood of the new and everlasting Covenant, *Heb 13. 20.* and on this Mediator and Covenant, the everlasting State, World, and Kingdom of Christ shall be founded and continued, *Rev. 5. 12, 13. and 22. 1, 3.*

That

That as all is founded in the one Sacrifice, so it is and shall be all effected by a new and everlasting Covenant (in and with the Lord Christ, who was this one Sacrifice) and not by the old.

1. That with *Adam* is broken, and could do nothing of this kind, That brought in Death, and the Curse upon Man, and upon the whole Creation for man's sin, *Gen. 3. 16. to 19.* but could not recover from that Estate.

2. The Law could not do it, being but a figurative Ministration, it could do nothing in this matter, but leave all under Curse and Death still, making nothing perfect, *Heb. 7. 19. and 11. 40.* but it must all be effected by a new Covenant of Grace and Life in the *second Man, who is the Lord from Heaven, Gen. 3. 15. and 22. 18. Cal. 3. 17. Life and immortality is brought to light through the Gospel, 2 Tim. 1. 10.*

The mystery of Iniquity having gotten very much footing in the World by confounding the Covenants, making them all but one, and not distinguishing according to the truth thereof. Much of Gospel-truth, relating to the Church here in this World, hath been clouded thereby, as well as the Glory that is to come; as likewise many dangerous Errors proceed therefrom, so that it's no marvel that the great Judgments threatned to come upon the professing part of the World in the latter days, is for *breaking the everlasting Covenant, Isa. 24. 5.*

That the Kingdoms of this World are given to the Princes and Powers thereof, (as subordinate unto Christ) until he come to take to himself his great Power, and to reign, at which the Nations will be angry, because they must then be judged, Rev. 11. 17, 18. and that it is the ordinance of God, and duty of his People, to be subject to them in all lawful things of worldly concern, Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14, 15. and patiently to bear and suffer whatever they meet with from Men, for the name and sake of Christ, till that day come, Act. 14. 22. 2 Thess. 1. 7. Jam. 5. 7, 8.

Thus have I endeavoured to give a brief account of my Faith in the great matters of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: And if I must be accounted by some an Heretick herein, I hope I shall gladly bear it, for the sake of Christ my dear Lord, till the great day of decision come, when all Mens Faith and Works shall be made manifest, of what sort it is; and then, every one that hath been right for God, shall have praise of him; and so I shall conclude this with these following Scriptures.

2 Pet. 3. 11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Vers. 14. Wherefore (beloved) seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Isa. 32. 4. The tongue of the stammerers shall be ready

ready to speak plain, and the heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge.

Chap. 29. 24. They that erred in spirit, shall come to Understanding; and they that murmured, shall learn Doctrine. Amen.

Psal. 116. 10. I believed, therefore have I spoken.

Luk. 2. 29, 30, 31. Now, Lord, let thy Servant depart in Peace; for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all People, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy People Israel.

Mat. 24. 14. And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World, for a witness unto all Nations, and then shall the end come, Rev. 14. 6, 7.

The Church with whom I walk, is united in the substance of this Faith, before declared.

The

The Postscript.

A Confession of Faith lately published from London, providentially coming to my hands; and contrary to my expectation, finding such things therein, as was and is truly grievous to me, it being inconsistent with the true Faith and Religion of God, I could not in good conscience, both towards God and Man, pass it by, without saying something thereunto.

In which I find, under the name of fundamental Principles of Faith, no less than seven things of special note, contrary thereunto, most of which I have before detected, and them I shall but only name; so that though there are many good Truths scattered therein, yet these contrary, unsound, and unscriptural notions contradict and undo them all.

As 1. Absolute Reprobation of the World from Eternity alone from the free Will of God, though not plainly in terms exprest, but more covertly and hiddenly, yet absolutely and fully stated; for they say, that *God hath immutably decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass; and that he elected or predestinated a certain number of Angels and Men to Eternal Life, to which there can be no addition, &c.* which states absolute Reprobation

bation to all the World besides, by an eternal Decree before the World was.

2. Christ dying to redeem the Elect only, and that none else can possibly obtain; which not only denieth the truth of God's Love to the World, and Christ's *giving himself for the life of the World*, but contains in it the absoluteft Reprobation of the World that can be stated: for if Christ died not for them, it's impossible they should be saved, *Act. 4. 12.*

3. Impossibility for any to believe, with the Gospel helps that God affordeth, without a mighty miraculous power; misunderstanding, and so wronging the Scripture for its confirmation, *Eph. 1. 19, 20.*

4. Justification by Faith without Works, and not by Faith neither, as the Scripture states it, viz. as the conditions and terms of our Justification, in *Pag. 40. Of Justification*, they say, *it is not by imputing Faith it self, the act of Believing, or any other Evangelical obedience, as their Righteousness; Faith is the alone instrument of Justification, as of receiving Christ: whereas the Scripture saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness, Gen. 15. 6. and Rom. 4. 3, 5. His Faith is counted for Righteousness, ver. 23, 24.* But they say plainly, No, it is not imputed, but only an Instrument, and what that is I do not know, nor is the Scripture acquainted with such language; but I leave the Reader to believe

believe the Scripture, or them, which he please.

5. Impossibility of falling from Grace, which is contrary to the whole current of Scripture, as before hath been shewed.

6. In Chap. 3. of the Decrees of God, *That God hath from all Eternity decreed in himself all things whatsoever comes to pass, &c.* and that this Decree is *immutable and unchangeable*, arising not from knowledge of what would be, but from his own determinate Will.

7. And in Chap. 5. of Divine Providence, *That this his determinate Counsel extends it self to the first fall, and all other sinful actions, both of Angels and Men (and that not by a bare permission) which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends, yet so as the sinfulness of their acts proceed only of the Creatures and not from God, who being most righteous, neither is nor can be the approver of sin, Psal. 50. 21. 1 Job. 2. 16.* These last words are true, and contradict all the rest as most Heretical and false, for he cannot but approve his own Decrees.

In these Positions the Mystery of Iniquity seems to be perfected, including a perfection of falshood, impiety, and abominations in them.

First, The abuse of the Scriptures for proof of this horrid Doctrine, not one of the Scriptures mentioned having any such thing in them, nor
indeed

indeed may we imagine any such thing to be in the holy Word of the holy God, without blasphemy against him. What, that God hath eternally decreed in himself all things whatsoever comes to pass? the determinate Counsel extending it self to all the sinful actions, both of Angels and Men? What, the Decreeer thereof, and yet not the Approver of his own Decrees?

Obj. But we have a way to distinguish between the Actions and the sinfulness of the Actions. God decreed all Actions, and all Actions in themselves are simply good, because acted in his Power, and according to his Decrees; but the sinfulness of the Action is the Creatures, of which God is no Approver.

To this I say, I think it will require more Logick and Rhetorick thus rightly to distinguish, than all the Persons in the World of this opinion will be able to find out.

Hath God decreed the act of Murther and not the sin? and so of Adultery, Witchcraft, and all other abominations? is not the act it self the sin? if there were no such act, there would be no such sin; therefore let them divide the act from the sin if they can, the act to be God's Decree, and the sin the Creatures, and God no approver thereof, though he decreed it, as they say.

But 1. To prove that God hath decreed all things whatsoever comes to pass, all sinful Actions, both of Angels and Men, Isa. 46. 10. Eph. 1. 11. Heb. 6. 17. is referred to; all which Scriptures speak

Speak only of God's own Works, and Counsel determined, and declared, especially relative to his Gospel-work of Salvation by Jesus Christ, and not his determining all the sinful actions of Angels and Men, as a weak capacity may easily discern. So the like of *Act. 15. 18.*

And as for *Act. 2. 23. & 4. 17, 28.* First, The Scriptures do not say, that God decreed them to crucifie his Son. *But that he was delivered by the determinate Counsel and foreknowledge of God,* for them to do unto him what he before knew they would do. He determined that his Son should give himself for the life of the World, and foreknew that the Jews with the rest would do that Work, and he determined to give him up to them, and they *by wicked hands crucified him.* And therein he bounded their actions to his own Counsel before determined.

But, Secondly, What ever the Divine Decree might be in this matter, is not material for proof of the thing asserted, if we should suppose that God decreed them to do it, without respect had to any condition in them as the cause thereof, which can never be proved.

Yet it being so great a Mystery of Grace, and that on which the Life of the World depended, I shall choose rather to lose my self in this My-sterious Decree, leaving it to God alone, than from this Example and bottomless Mystery, to draw up so impious a Conclusion; that God hath

hath from his own Will from all Eternity, determined, by an immutable Decree, all the wickedness both of Devils and Men, that ever hath been, is, or shall be in the World. And as for the Scriptures referr'd to, for proving God's ordering all things by his Providence, for the accomplishing of his Decrees, relative to the sins of both *Angels and Men, Providence powerfully over-rules all things*, for the accomplishment thereof, *2 King. 19. 28. Ps. 76. 10.* the prudent may easily discern how far wide it is from proving this matter. And as for *Rom. 9. 15, 18, 22, 23.* so frequently referr'd to, I have (I suppose) before said enough to discover their fallacy in so applying thereof, *viz. to understand these several sayings of the Apostle, contrary to the whole volumn of the Book of God, and contrary to the very Name, Nature, and Truth of God, must needs be very impious; and very probably these may be some of the hard things to be understood, written by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle mentioned, 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16. which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest to their own destruction.*

So that this Principle not only abuseth God in his Decrees, to decree all sinful actions, but likewise in his Providence, and Government, *in powerfully over-ruling and ordering all things*, and to so bad an end, and abusing the holy Scripture for proof thereof.

2. As it's unscriptural, and so beliethe God, so
its

its impious, laying all the sins and wickedness in the World, both of Devils and Men at God's door: for if he hath decreed all, and *that not by a bare permission, but wisely and powerfully ordereth it to his own ends*; there is (then) no avoiding it, but the Decree must be accomplished. So that by this Doctrine all the sins in the World are committed by the unchangeable Decree of God, and powerful over-ruling Providence, in order thereunto. And so, as an effect hereof, all the Judgments and Plagues threatned and inflicted, in this life and that which is to come, as a punishment of sin, flows from the eternal and immutable Decree of God, and so impossible by any means to be prevented: which is most impious to imagin and contrary to the Scripture, *Jer. 18. 7, 8. Isa. 55. 6, 7.*

Thirdly, It renders God to take pleasure in the Sin and Judgment of his Creatures: for in the accomplishing of his own free immutable Will, must be his supream and absolute pleasure; that which he hath immutably determined, being done, must needs be well pleasing to him: So that it renders God to take pleasure in the Sin and Judgment of Men, contrary to his own word. 1. For Sin, he hateth it, and therefore decreed it not, *Pro. 6. 16, to 19. Jer. 44. 4.* 2. And for Judgment, he pitieth poor sinners who wilfully expose themselves thereunto, *Hos. 11. 8, 9. Luk. 19. 41, 42, 43, 44. Lam. 3. 33.* *He doth not afflict willingly,*

willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. Therefore he decreed it not, any otherwise than as a punishment for Sin, which might by repentance have been avoided, *Jer. 18. 8.* So that it not only renders God by his Eternal Decree, to be the first cause of all the Sin, of all the Hatred, Wrath, Murders, Adulteries, Drunkenness, Treasons, Idolatries, Witchcrafts and Rebellions in the World, and so of all the Judgments, which are the effect thereof, but that its well pleasing and delightful to him, it being the effect of his eternal and unchangeable Decree, which is contrary to his word, most and impious to imagine.

Fourthly, It's that which renders God to be contradictory and inconsistent to himself, and uncertain in any part of his Word and Will to Men; it renders it full of contradiction, to command one thing and hath decreed the contrary; to command Men to believe, repent and be holy, and hath decreed the contrary; hath decreed all the Wickedness and Abominations in the World, and yet commands the contrary; and will damn people for breach of his Commands, which himself decreed from all eternity that they should not keep, which is most impious to imagine.

Fifthly, And so it renders his Word (which is his absolute revealed Will to Men) to be incredible, and so destroyeth the ground of Faith, which is the truth and faithfulness of God in his Word: for if it were true, that he commands

one thing, and hath decreed another directly contrary to it, by the same rule and reason, may he promise one thing, when he hath decreed the contrary, especially all his Promises being on condition of doing his Precepts, and if his Decrees be contrary to his Precepts, so may they be contrary to his Promises, and so there be no truth, neither in his Precepts nor his Promises: and it lays a foundation for to teach people so to believe, and therefore its most impious to be imagined.

Sixthly, It's that which renders the most wicked and vile, to be the truest and best Servants of God: for, 1st, (If this were true) they do his Will most freely, and naturally, and such are reputed to be his best Servants, whereas (as is by them confest) Believing, Repenting and Obeying the Lord in his revealed Will, is hard and difficult, and is attended (at best) with many weakneses, and sometimes, in some things unwillingness; whereas the others serve him in his absolute decreed Will, most freely and voluntarily. 2. They serve him most perfectly, answering his decreed Will in all things, (whereas the Saints are attended with many failings and coming short in service) the others not, and therefore must needs be the best Sarvants of God, if this Doctrine were true, which is most impious to imagine.

Seventhly, It's that which renders God in his
eternal

eternal Will, to take more pleasure in sin and wickedness, than in holiness, in that he hath decreed so much sin and wickedness to be in the World, and so little holiness, which is most impious to imagine.

Eightly, It's that which renders God to love Judgment more than Mercy, having from his own Will freely decreed so much Sin, Judgment and Damnation to the World, and so little Mercy and Salvation to Men; which is contrary to his Word and Oath, *Exod. 34.6,7. Ezek. 33. 11. Job. 3. 16.* and is therefore most impious to imagine.

Ninthly, It's that which tends to end all Christian Religion in the World: for if God Command one thing, and hath Decreed another, it leaves us at a loss in all things: no Man knows when he doth his Will, and when not: *He commands all Men everywhere to repent*; yet by this Doctrine, hath decreed the Sin and Damnation of (almost) all the World; he commands to pray for all Men, yet hath decreed the Sin and Damnation of (almost) all Men. It rationally ends all repentance for Sin, all reproofs for Sin, all blamings of Men for Sin, none can be reproveable for any of their actions, either Saints or Sinners, their works being all decreed of old, it's all the holy Will of God: If his decreed Will be holy, then the keeping thereof must be holy, and so no such thing as Sin in the World, and so it

necessarily turns all those sayings in Scripture, that manifest God's displeasure against Sin into a lie, as that *he is angry with the wicked every day*, *Psal. 7. 11.* Yea and angry (and sometimes *very angry*) with his own People, because of Sin, *Deut. 1. 31.* and *9. 20.* *Psal. 74. 1.* which if Sin be the effecting of his absolute decreed Will, it's impossible to be true, that he should be angry with any for doing his freely decreed Will. So that this Principle leaves no room for any Religion, and therefore is most impious.

Tenthly, If God immutably determined all sinful acts, it lays a foundation for Rantism, Atheism, and all manner of filthiness and prophaneness in the World. And indeed had I met with such a Principle from the Ranters, I should not have marvelled, it being the foundation of their practice, *viz.* that all is the decreed Will of God, and therefore all is alike good, and so, no such thing as Sin in the World; this being the foundation of so horrid a building, it is most impious to assert or imagine.

Eleventhly, It's that which renders God to be worse to Men than the Devil, and that both in respect to Sin and Punishment. 1. Of Sin, the Devil can but tempt unto it, and may be resisted, *Jam. 4. 7.* but the eternal Decree of God is irresistible, that must be done. 2. The Devil can by temptation, but endeavour by sin to fit Men for Judgment; but by this Doctrine, the eternal im-

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mutable Decree, hath destinated the world, both to Sin and Judgment, without all hope or possible help, which if the Devil believed (which without doubt he dos not, but knows the contrary) it would make him a very sluggard, his work being already effected by eternal Decree, he need not go *about like a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour*, if all were devoured by the eternal and irresistible Decree ! which were it true, O, Wo to the World that they have such a God ! which is most impious to imagine. And as for what they say, that God does not force any to sin, but leaves them to the liberty of their wills, helps not, for the Decree must be effected.

Twelfthly, And finally, as an effect of all, It strikes a deadly blow to the whole Name, Nature and Being of God, as opened to us both in his Word and by his Works.

As 1. In his Holiness, that he *is most holy*; that *Holy and Reverent is his name*; that he loveth Righteousness, and hateth Sin and Wickedness, and hateth nothing else but Sin, and for Sins sake : but this asserts all the unholiness, sins and wickedness in the World, both of Devils and Men, to be his birth from all eternity, by an eternal and immutable Decree.

2. In his Goodness and Mercy to Men, the Scripture testifieth that he *is good to all*, that he loved the World in the gift of his Son : but this kills this Doctrine of Goodness and Mercy to

the World, asserting the Sin and Judgment of the World established by an immutable Decree before the World was, which renders the great design of God in the Creation, to be the Sin and Judgment of the World, without all hope or help, and in sending his Son to effect the same, which is most impious to imagine.

3. In his Justice. The Scripture saith, that *all his ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he*, Deut. 32. 4. But this fastens on him the greatest injustice imaginable, to determine Men by a forcible and irresistible Decree (before they were) to sin against his Law, that so he might take Justice on them. Which likewise as much derogates from his Wisdom in finding no more righteous a way to magnify his Justice, than by enforcing Men to sin by an irresistible Decree, and over-ruling Providence in order thereunto, that so Justice might take place upon them. What such a thing would be accounted among Men, I need not speak.

But here it will be objected, That God is under no Law, his own Will is his Law, and whatever he willeth is good and righteous; and therefore, what have we to do to question his Will and Work, or to say unto him, *what doest thou?* Róm. 9. 14 to 22. hath enough in it to confirm this, and to stop all Mouths in this matter.

Answ. 1. It's true, the Will of God is his Law, and whatever he wills is just and right. Yet 2. It behoves us to understand, that such is the holiness of his Nature and Name, that he can will nothing which is contrary thereunto. And 3. That such is his Truth and Faithfulness, that he never did nor can will any thing that is contrary to his Word, *Rom.* 3. 3, 4. *Tit.* 1. 2. That though he be under no Law of Mans making, yet he is under the Law of his own Name and Nature, of his own revealed Word and Will, and those who say otherwise, end all ground of Faith and Religion. And as for *Rom.* 9. I have said enough to that already, it not relating to his eternal Decrees, but his present actings towards Men, in way of Judgment for former Iniquity; and otherwise to understand it, is contrary to the Name, Nature, and Truth of God in his Word; and therefore is impious so to imagine.

4. And it strikes as deeply at the Truth and Faithfulness of God in his Word, which presents us with his *being good to all*, and with his love to all, in which he sweareth, that he *hath no pleasure in the death of the Wicked*, but this gives him the lye in all, asserting an eternal Decree both of Sin and Death, before the World was: *But let God be true, and every Man a Lyar*, in this matter.

Thus have I endeavoured (though very briefly) to open this great Mystery of Iniquity, and had

it not been stated as a Foundation-Principle of Faith (though tending to end all Faith) and clothed in so fine a dress, as making so much for the exaltation of God in his Name, and for the consolation of Christians, had at present said nothing to it; and all arising from, and as the effects of that untimely born Monster, *Absolute Reprobation of the World by an immutable Decree before ever it had a Being.* And from hence, as the Reprobation was decreed, so must the Sin, to make the Reprobation certain and sure; and from hence comes in the denial of God's love to the World, and Christ's giving himself a Sacrifice for the sins of the World; all is to confirm this monstrous Birth, with several other things that I could name that flows from it, as the effects thereof.

Obj. Some may say, O Sir, you are too rash, you out-run the Bounds of Moderation, and your own Principle, which is for Moderation, and the Gospel-spirit of Love and Peace; and besides, the Asserters of this Principle intend no such things as you say are included therein, but do often declare in other of their Articles to be against Sin, and for Holiness.

Ans. 1. I am of the same Mind, and have more Charity towards the Persons concerned herein, than to think they really intend all that is included in this Principle, and therefore shall not say they are Hereticks, though the Principles in themselves are as deeply heretical as any can possibly be.

Ans. 2.

Answ. 2. Their many sayings to the contrary, argues either, 1. Their ignorance of their own Principles, not understanding the true nature and tendency thereof, it being truly and really the open door to Rantism. At this very door it entred (and they have anew set it open again;) They concluded that God having decreed all things, then all acts must be alike good and pleasing to God, that there could be no such thing in the World as Sin; and indeed, if it were true, that *all things whatsoever come to pass in the World*, were God's birth, by virtue of his eternal Decree, then all must be good, and the Ranters in the right Religion, which far be it from any sober Christian to imagine. Or, 2. It argues their contradiction (for indeed, if they held it without contradiction, it must needs be the most damnable Principle in the World) to assert God to be Author of all things whatsoever, by an eternal and immutable Decree, and yet pretend some of those things to be evil. sinful, and damnable, and God not to be the Approver thereof, yet his own decreed act is the highest contradiction and irreconcilable to it self; nor will that vain device any whit help in this matter (as before I shewed) that the act is God's, and so good, but the sin is the Creatures, till they can either religiously or rationally distinguish between the act and the sin, the act being the sin; were there no such acts, there could be no such sins.

fin, *fin being the transgression of the Law* ; it will stand as the greatest and most irreconcilable contradiction as can be imagined, or the greatest Blasphemy that can be against God.

3. It being the over-ruling Article, stated next to the Being of God. All the rest must be understood by this, and stoop to it ; nothing may be understood in the rest that is contrary to this, this being the foundation of all, and indeed undoeth and contradicth all the rest at once : for all decreed acts are good, and so there can be no Sin, and so no Judgment ; and so saith the Principle it self, from whence they learned it ; and as I could name, *that there is nothing Sin as it is the Decree of God, that the things which he decreed are most perfectly good, (which in it self is a great truth, but not that he decreed all things whatsoever come to pass, then he decreed things that are perfectly evil, which is contradictory) neither is there any thing of it self absolutely evil, then it must be absolutely good.* This is the bottom of this horrid and impious Principle of Faith, which indeed tends to end all Religion.

And of this Faith, they would insinuate the Reader, all sound Christians to be ; but I know many more (and I hope there are more Congregations and Christians) that do abhor it than believe it ; and they had done well and honestly to have distinguished, seeing they could not but know there are more of a contrary Faith in this matter than

than themselves, but that they would have People to believe that they are of the only true sound Faith, whereas, if there be any Mystery of Iniquity, or Apostacy from the true Faith in the World, it may be found here, seeing none can be worse.

4. And as for a supposition of rashness, and out-running the Bounds of Moderation, and a Gospel-spirit in this matter, I say, No; and I doubt not but it will so appear to unbiassed Persons, the depth of the matter being seriously pondered, it being not Persons, but things I am contending against, even *spiritual Wickedness in high places*: It is for the Name of God, Christ and the Gospel: it is against this God-dishonouring, Gospel-destroying, Sin-exalting, and Soul-undoing Principle of Faith that I am contending, I design no wrong to Men, but their eternal Good, their Repentance.

But as for this horrid Principle, whose birth (as is most manifest) is from the Prince and Power of Darkness, I cannot spare, and that it is from Satan, and not from above, is most apparent.

For, 1. It is not of God. What? shall we believe that God decreed things that are so absolutely contrary to his Name, Nature, and holy Word? shall we believe that God decreed things which himself calls *abominable things, which he bates, and filthy stinking things*, Jer. 44. 4. *Psal.*

14. 1, 2, 3. *detestible and abominable things*, Jer. 16. 18. Ezek. 5. 11. and 7. 20. *accursed things*, Josh. 7. 13, 15. *wicked things that provoke him to anger*, 2 King. 17. 11. *horrible things*, Jer. 18. 13. and 23. 14. *yea, things that never came into the heart of God to have done*, Jer. 7. 31. I say, shall we believe that God decreed all these things; it's a Faith to be abhorred of all serious Christians, it turning the whole Book of God into a lye.

2. As it is not of God, so it is immoral, and never came from the Light of Nature, that hath more honourable thoughts of God, than to father all the wicked acts of Men upon God himself; we may truly say, as Jer. 18. 13. *Ask ye now among the Heathen, who hath heard such things? the Virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing*: Therefore it must needs be from the Prince and Power of Darkness thus to belye the Lord, it being contrary to the holy Name, Nature, and Word of God, and an abhorrency to the Law and Light of Nature.

And therefore I cannot spare this impious Principle of Absolute Reprobation of the World by an immutable Decree before it was made, as if God had made the World for no other end but by an eternal Decree to sin and be damned. I would shame yea set fire on this impious Principle, even the fire of the Word and Spirit of Truth,

Truth, to the end (if possible) this prodigious monster, with all its impious concomitants, might be fired and frighted out of the World, and returned to its place, and never be named among Men any more, especially as an Article of Christian Faith, I would if I might, give it its death wound, that there might be no need of another stroke, it having filled the World with iniquity and contention for many generations; if it might now have its end, God will have the Glory, and Men the advantage.

Thus, according to the advice therein, having as prudently as I could, and according to the best light and understanding that God hath given me herein, considered and pondered this matter, and have herein given a very brief account thereof, to the intent that it may be a word of warning to all, to beware of being corrupted thereby, and that the asserters thereof may speedily repent and blot it out of their Creed, and I pray the Lord to grant them Grace so to do.
Amen.

If any should be inquisitive to know my thoughts about the eternal Decrees and Providence of God.

I Answer, 1. My desire is, not to have any thoughts of God, or of his Decrees, but such as are holy and honourable to his Name, which that it may so be,

2. I dare not think of any Decree in God, that is contrary to his holy Name and Nature, nor in it self (distinct from sin as the cause) contrary to the good of Men, nor contrary to his holy Word, his revealed Will, and Law of Grace to Men : if I should, I must therein make null and void all his Word, or at best render it uncertain, and so no ground or rule of Faith.

3. That his revealed Will, both in his Precepts, Promises, and Threats, is his decreed Will, opened, revealed and made known to Men in his Word, *Act. 20. 20, 27.*

4. That all his own Works of Creation, Preservation, Redemption by Jesus Christ, and effecting the Resurrection, and World to come, with all the means tending thereunto, was decreed by him, *Act. 15. 18. Ephes. 1. 11.* but not all nor any of the Sins of Men.

5. That there is, nor never was any secret Decree or Will in God, contrary to his revealed Word and Will made known to Men, in which our safety is assured, *Mal. 3. 6.*

6. That it's my concern, to desire and endeavour to know his revealed Will, and it to believe, and live to him therein; assuring my self there is no secret Will in God that is contrary thereunto, *Dent. 29. 29.*

But I believe it to be an Abomination to be abhorred, to believe that all the actions of Angels

gels and Men, are the conception and birth of the eternal Decree of God. All that is good, being of and from God, and all the evil acts of Sin being of and from the Devil, and Men themselves; and the evil of punishment from God, as the just and righteous reward of punishment, or wages of Sin.

2. And as concerning Providence. 1. That God by his Providence ordereth and governeth all things well, and that Afflictions come not to pass by chance or fortune (as Men usually understand it) but by the over-ruling hand of Providence, *Job* 5. 6. and that by the same over-ruling Providence, all the afflictions of his People shall work for their good. *Rom.* 8. 28.

And that though God decreed not the sinful acts of any, no not the *Jews* crucifying Christ, nor *Judas* betraying him, nor *Joseph's* Brethren selling him to *Ægypt*, yet he foreseeing they would do it, left them to the libertiy of their own wills in the matter: and by over-ruling Providence brings about his own designs thereby to his own praise; but that Providence hath an over-ruling hand in the Sins of Men, for accomplishing thereof, according to his eternal Decree, (any otherwise than by bare permission, and over-ruling thereof as before I said) I protest against, as most unholy to imagine.

To conclude, Let the Reader, *prove all things,*
and

and hold fast that which is good, 1 Thes. 5. 21.

Rom. 12. 9. Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.

Phil. 4. 8. Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

FINIS.

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These Books following have been lately printed for the Author, Thomas Collier.

1. **T**HE Body of Divinity, or a Confession of Faith: being the Substance of Christianity; containing the most material things relating both to matters of Faith and Practice.

2. An Additional Word to the Body of Divinity; being the Substance of Christianity, added on special occasion, about the Doctrine of Election, Universal and special Grace. Being an Essay for Peace and Union amongst all the Sons and Daughters of Peace.

3. A sober and moderate Answer to *Nehemiah Cox's* Invective (pretended) Refutation (as he saith) of the gross Errors and Heresies asserted by *Thomas Collier* in his Additional VVord: VVherein his Refutation is examined, and found too light.

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